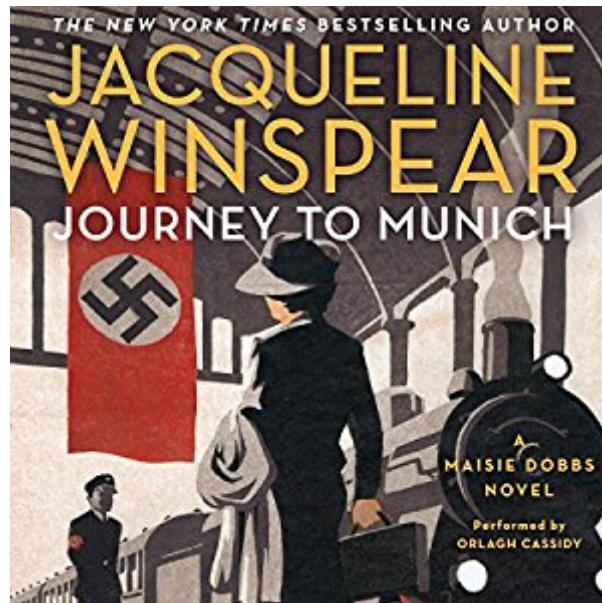




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Journey To Munich: A Maisie Dobbs Novel



Synopsis

Working with the British Secret Service on an undercover mission, Maisie Dobbs is sent to Hitler's Germany in this thrilling tale of danger and intrigue - the 12th novel in Jacqueline Winspear's New York Times best-selling "series that seems to get better with each entry" (The Wall Street Journal). It's early 1938, and Maisie Dobbs is back in England. On a fine yet chilly morning, as she walks toward Fitzroy Square - a place of many memories - she is intercepted by Brian Huntley and Robert MacFarlane of the Secret Service. The German government has agreed to release a British subject from prison, but only if he is handed over to a family member. Because the man's wife is bedridden and his daughter has been killed in an accident, the Secret Service wants Maisie - who bears a striking resemblance to the daughter - to retrieve the man from Dachau, on the outskirts of Munich. The British government is not alone in its interest in Maisie's travel plans. Her nemesis - the man she holds responsible for her husband's death - has learned of her journey and is also desperate for her help. Traveling into the heart of Nazi Germany, Maisie encounters unexpected dangers - and finds herself questioning whether it's time to return to the work she loved. But the Secret Service may have other ideas....

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I very, very nearly passed up the chance to read this book, having been disappointed by several of the most recent "mysteries" featuring Maisie Dobbs, most of which ended up being a vehicle for a humorless and smug character who is, of course, infinitely smarter than everyone else around her,

to muse endlessly on human follies and on psychological phenomena. It wasn't very interesting and Maisie became downright annoying as a character; had I met her in person, I probably would have wanted to slap her. Thankfully, I resisted my inclination, because somehow, miraculously, the series has a new lease on life, and instead of being treated to endless series of interior monologues by Maisie, this book has real drama, suspense and intrigue! In other words, it's actually an exciting page-turner, and I literally couldn't put it down, instead of having to force myself to finish it.

Hallelujah! Sure, Maisie could stand to be slightly less perfect and less smug (of course, when she is being trained before the journey in the title, when she first picks up a gun to shoot, she hits a bulls-eye with her first shot...) and she still has her propensity to proffer unsolicited wisdom to all and sundry. (It might be wise, but it's like having that annoying friend who is ALWAYS right and knows it...) But those become very minor annoyances, slipping into the background of what is a suspenseful yarn. It's the eve of the 1938 Anschluss that will reunite Germany with Austria and Maisie, back in London at last but still unable to settle, agrees to the Secret Service's plea to help them with a different task: to reunite a "boffin", aka an industrialist/tinkerer with his family, and, not coincidentally, with the British government, who want him to design a kind of landing craft for what it now seems clear will be a new war with Germany. Leon Donat ran afoul of the Germans on a business trip there two years earlier but the Brits have finally managed to ransom him out of Dachau -- but only if a family member shows up in person to claim him. Donat's daughter is too ill to travel, so Maisie is brought in as a ringer. But there are all kinds of complications, not least that Elaine Otterburn, with whom Maisie shares a tragic past, also is in Berlin. Can Maisie get everyone out safely? Ultimately, Winspear doesn't break any new ground here, but that doesn't matter. This is several hours of suspenseful and dramatic reading, with some good atmosphere thrown in as well. I picked it up with trepidation and put it down reluctantly and only after I had turned the last page. After coming close to vowing never to read another Maisie Dobbs novel, I'm now cautiously looking forward to see whether Winspear can keep up this new pace.

Fans of British mystery who have not yet discovered Jacqueline Winspear's Maisie Dobbs novels are in for a treat. "Journey to Munich" is the second of the series that I have read, after "A Dangerous Place", which is well into the series, and I anticipate working back to the beginning and catching up. One of the things I liked about the two Maisie Dobbs novels I have read is that Ms Winspear does an excellent job of weaving a bit of backstory into the current book -- enough so that a new reader does not find themselves all at sea in the current book, but not so much as to be tiresome. This new book finds Maisie being recruited by the British Secret Service to

go to pre-war Nazi Germany to aid in the return of an English businessman who has been imprisoned by the Hitler regime for 2 years. The Nazis will only allow the man to be released to a family member, so Maisie is to impersonate the man's daughter, who is too ill to travel (BTW -- the synopsis of the book is wrong in this respect, stating that the man's daughter had been killed in an accident. also got a few other things wrong in their synopsis). As if this assignment were not delicate and dangerous enough, Maisie agrees to attempt to locate and effect the return to England of the daughter of Canadian newspaper magnate John Otterburn (a clever renaming of the real-life Lord Beaverbrook, a Canadian newspaper tycoon who was named the UK's Minister of Aircraft Production by Winston Churchill in 1940.) The complication in this second task comes courtesy of the fact that Maisie has long held the young woman in question to be at least partially responsible for her husband's death at the controls of an experimental aircraft. Maisie's tense confrontations with the cold-blooded Nazi regime, in the heart of their place of power -- Munich -- offers tense moments that serve the story well. She also moves on in her personal life, coming to grips, finally, with the loss of her husband and unborn child several years before, readying the character for a new era. I think that we can look forward to some new and interesting adventures from Maisie Dobbs as Europe, England, and indeed the entire world are plunged into total war for the second time in a quarter-century.

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